SK24

Boudreau, Paul E

To: Burger, David
Subject: RE: Media Coverage of Ambassador's Remarks and Comments Yesterday

RELEASED IN FULL

From: Orlansky, Michael D
Sent: Thursday, January 26, 2006 9:06 AM
To: Milovanovic, Gillian A; Wohlers, Paul; Hubler, Stephen A
Cc: Oakley, Carol V
Subject: Media Coverage of Ambassador's Remarks and Comments Yesterday

We are compiling media reports on yesterday's activities.

Regarding the COE report and the el-Masri case, which focus on the Prime Minister and Public Prosecutor, as well as the Ambassador, headlines and points of emphasis vary considerably. Will send a summary in 15 minutes or so.

The most recent guidance from the Department on the situation (below) did in fact point out that there is a lack of evidence at this point. Swiss Europarliamentarian Dick Marty has also been quoted as saying that he does not have hard evidence to support allegations of secret prisons in Europe.

Ambassador's remarks at the opening of the Public Prosecutor's office for fighting organized crime -- highlighting that crime and corruption are significant obstacles to political and economic development -- and at signing of S&T Agreement, are also widely and positively covered in the media.

Mike

(Summary from NHQS Skopje Dawn 1/26/06)
Subject: El Masri Case

Macedonia was the topic in the Council of Europe, not only because of the El Masri case, but also because the country is more frequently mentioned as one of the few European countries that have secret CIA prisons. MoI is supposed to give information on this case, but they have not yet initiated any special investigations in reference with the serious accusations by Germany, since they believe that this is a cleared case. Macedonian and the US state representatives continue to keep quiet in reference with the El Masri case despite the criticisms of the EU on Tuesday. PM Buckovski does not want to prejudge anything about the case and dismisses the allegations that the Lebanese who has a German passport was kidnapped and maltreated in Macedonia. **US Ambassador to Macedonia Milovanovic is aware of the criticisms and everything else that has been said about the case, but she has nothing to say because she knows there is no evidence.** Now the ball is passed to the Public Prosecutor Prcevski. *"The German Public Prosecutor requested information and legal assistance from Macedonia in reference with the El Masri case. We did receive a request for legal assistance, but it is still too early to discuss this since the case must be assessed from all aspects and consequently we should give to them whatever is within the frames of the International and European convention, as well as in accordance to our provisions for legal assistance,"* Prcevski announced yesterday. Igor Ivanovski, the chief of Macedonia's delegation to the Council of Europe PA, met yesterday with Dick Marty, the Swiss official appointed to investigate the alleged existence of CIA secret prisons in Europe, and told him that the Macedonian Government would submit all required information to the CE until February 21. (Dnevnik; Utrinski Vesnik; Makedonija Denes; Vreme; Vecer; Lajm; Fakti; A1; Telma; Kanal 5; Sitel, MTV, MIA)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE
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(From State Dept. Rapid Response Unit, 1/24/2006) -- **Europe Aware of Renditions, No Secret Prisons Found:**

European media headlines the just-released interim report in which Council of Europe investigator Dick Marty states: "It is highly unlikely that European governments, or at least their intelligence services, were unaware of the 'rendition' of more than 100 persons." While the report is still critical of the US practice of "outsourcing" torture and confirms renditions, **no firm evidence found to support allegations of CIA prisons in Europe.**

Message:

- The United States has respected -- and will continue to respect -- the sovereignty of other countries.

- Rendition is a vital tool in combating transnational terrorism. Its use is not unique to the United States, or to the current administration.

- In conducting such renditions, it is the policy of the United States, and I presume of any other democracies that use this procedure, to comply with its laws and comply with its treaty obligations, including those under the Convention Against Torture. (Sec. Rice)

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